



Australian Bureau of Statistics

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ABOUT THIS RELEASE

This paper outlines recent Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) work on developing new measures of the output of the Australian Justice Sector. This work is part of an ABS program, initiated in 1994, to develop improved measures of aggregate output for several significant non-market service industries. The ultimate objective is to use these measures to enhance the Australian System of National Accounts (ASNA), which provide a systematic summary of national economic activity and the structure of the economy.

The output measures for non-market sectors in the ASNA are, at present, less than ideal. Output is measured as the sum of expenditure on labour, capital and intermediate inputs. This input-based measure is often an incomplete representation of output as it fails to account for changes in productivity. Input-based measures will only reflect true 'output' if technological progress and other productivity improvements do not occur or are insignificant - an assumption which is unlikely to hold in the long run.

New experimental output measures were developed for health and government education services in 1996-97 and 1997-98. Attention has since turned to estimation of justice sector output, which is the focus of this paper. Separate experimental output measures are developed for police services, justice services and corrective centres respectively. In each case, the paper presents;

- the definition of the sector,
- a brief overview of the results of investigations into the structure of the sector,
- definition and measurement of output in the sector,
- availability of data,
- creation of output indices using available data, and
- conclusions and recommendations for implementation of the new measures.

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